

The Role of Government Policy in the Administration of School Funds in Actonville
Public Schools

By

Lionel Rabinder Singh

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I dedicate this dissertation to:

My father Sirjit Singh,

My mother Sarah Margaret Singh,

My wife Delene Singh,

My son Lionel Sirjit Singh and

My daughter Delese Sarah Singh

for the sacrifices they made in granting me the opportunity to complete this degree.



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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION

1.1 ORIENTATION

With the advent of democracy to South Africa in 1994 all laws governing the South African way of life underwent concomitant changes in order to accommodate our new democracy. This democracy also had the task of changing our education system and the way in which it is to be managed, forever.

Bisschoff (1997:iv) observes that the immensity of the challenge to transform the education system of South Africa has been grossly underestimated. To move from racially divided education systems to a single system with nine decentralized administrations is a mammoth task. This was to be achieved through, amongst other things, the application of appropriate policies.

To date, the process of transforming education in South Africa has taken root visibly at all levels of the system. Outlined below is part of the growing evidence, related to this transformation:

- **Admissions Policy**
Since the promulgation of the South African Schools Act No 84 of 1996 (SASA), ex-Transvaal Education Department (TED), ex-House of Representatives (HOR) and ex-House of Delegate (HOD) schools opened their doors for learners from other racial groups.
- **Outcomes-Based Education (OBE)**
The introduction of Outcomes-Based Education and a curriculum that is responsive to the needs of the learners as well as the goals of the country, ought not only make school offering appealing to learners and parents, but it also affords parents wide opportunities to access various competencies. The Department of

Education has devoted significant resources to encouraging these factors and to induce a stimulating culture of teaching and learning.

- Self Governing Schools

SASA (1996:2A-2B) stipulates that School Governing Bodies should raise funds for their schools to supplement State funds that are inadequate in order to uplift the image of their schools. It is Government Policy to mandate School Governing Bodies to take responsibility for collecting funds and donations to resource their schools, and to ensure the development of the school by providing quality education for all. School Governing Bodies (SGB's) are also expected to take decisions on the choice of subjects according to provincial curriculum, and to maintain school buildings and grounds (**Litshani, 1998:3**).

Some research has already been conducted on the role that government policy plays in the administration of financial resources in public schools. **Bisschoff (1997:iv)** asserts that the changes occurring in South Africa today are a microcosm of the changes and paradigm shifts taking place world-wide. Understanding and embracing these changes require a fundamental alteration in the mindset of school principals and other educational managers to ensure successful participation in the transformation of the educational scene in South Africa. Self-Management requires a different approach where the role of government is limited to the allocation of budgets and subsequent audit to ensure that public money has been properly spent. The internal deployment and management of these funds are the responsibility of governing bodies, and their internal equivalents and senior managers (**Coleman and Anderson, 2000:vii**).

This topic merits attention because South Africa's current transformation process has effected momentous policy changes that have been designed under the extreme pressure of redesigning a whole society. To add to this, we need to be aware of problems caused not only by policy mistakes but also by inappropriate

implementation of these policies. Therefore we need to look at the process of policy implementation from time to time in order to assess the degree of alignment with policy directives and effect various changes timeously in our attempt to fine-tune our systemic and individual capacities on an ongoing basis.

1.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM

The description of the problem will take on the following approach:

- Motivation of the problem
- Stating the problem

1.2.1 Motivation of the Problem

In motivating the problem Figure 1.1, Figure 1.2 and Figure 1.3 on the following pages will be used in an attempt to highlight sources of possible problems as experienced by school managers in the administration of school funds.

1.2.1.1 Possible reasons for Implementation Problems

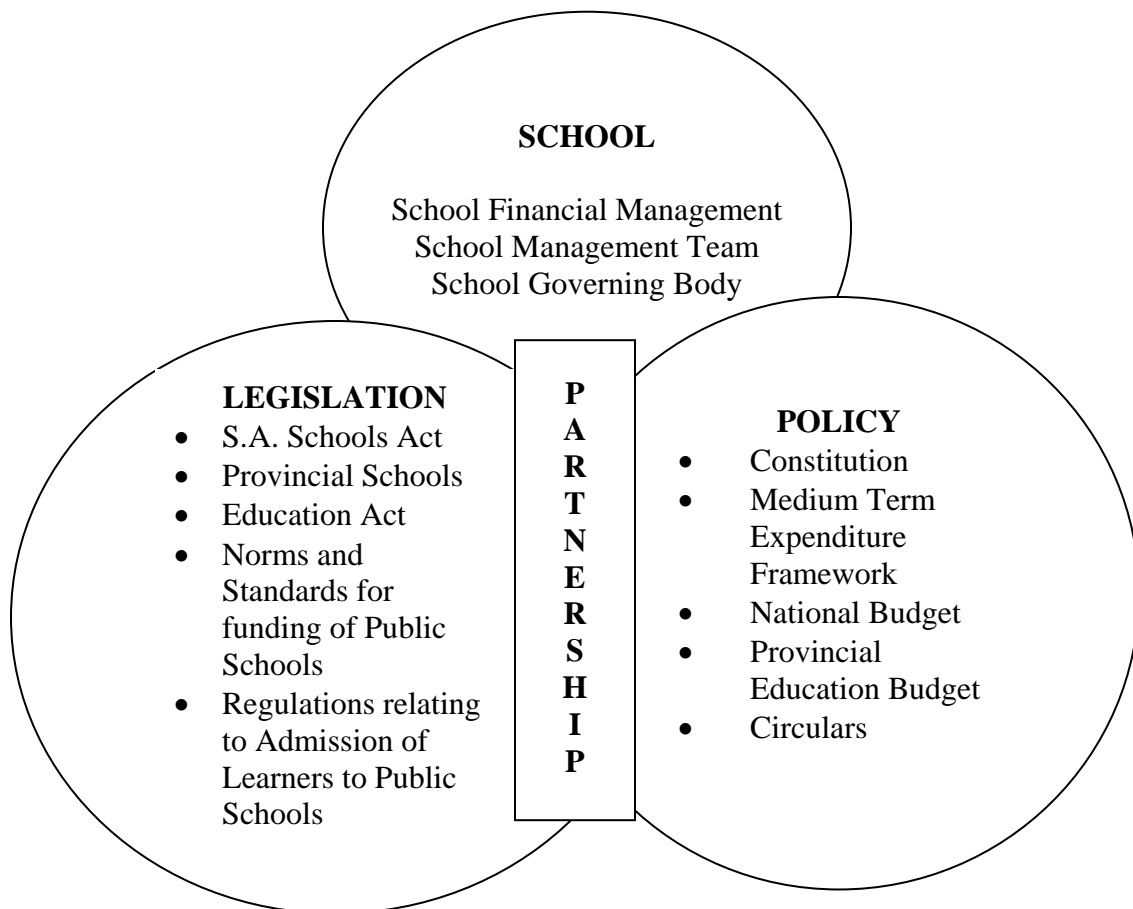
Implementation problems arise when policy directives have been misunderstood by managers at various levels of the department, or at the school, perhaps because of insufficient explanations and socialization from the Department of Education and the Provincial Education Departments due to:

(i) Legislation and Policy

In education, South Africa has amongst the best informed and progressive policies in the world. However, in the hurry to deliver transforming policies the researcher argues that too many changes have been implemented

too soon. This information overdose had a demoralising effect on educational practitioners because policies now demanded new ways of thinking and doing. Personnel were unsure whether what they were doing was correct or not.

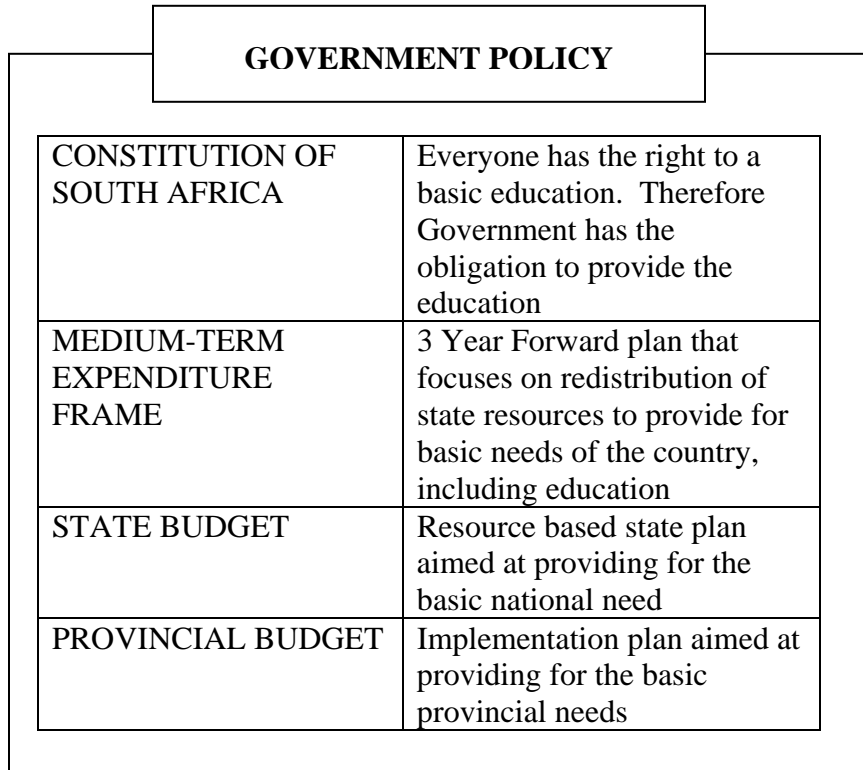
FIGURE 1.1: THE INTER-RELATIONSHIP



(ii) Outcomes Based Curriculum

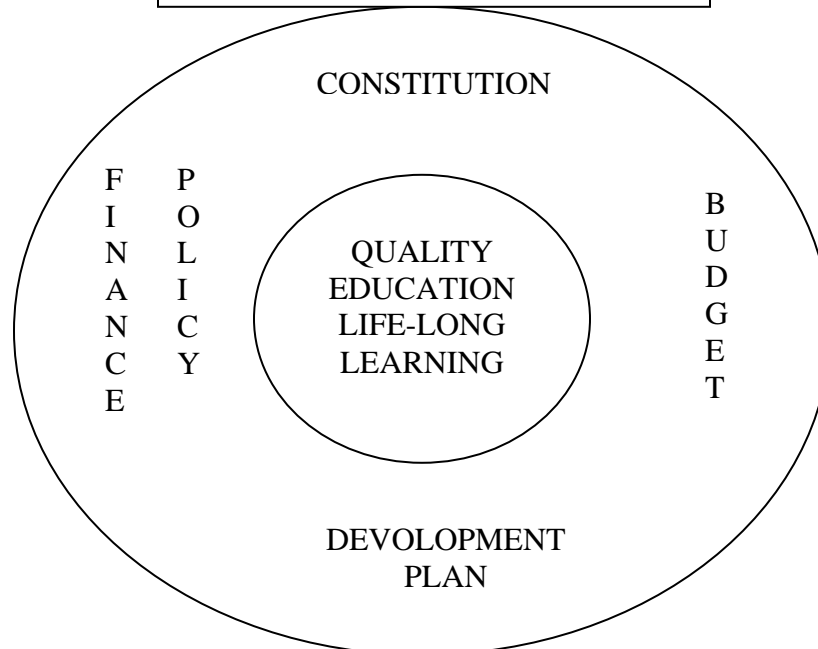
Although Curriculum 2005 inaugurated a new dispensation in education, its implementation occurred in conditions that did not enable it to meet either social or personal educational goals. This caused confusion among educationists and frustration amongst educational managers who could hardly offer any meaningful leadership.

FIGURE 1.2: WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP?



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THE SCHOOL



The immediate post-election context in which educational transformation legislation and its concomitant implementation was introduced, was one of fiscal restraint and heightened social pressure for immediate and visible change. This context had an immediate and direct impact on how legislation was formulated and implemented. In its movement from policy to practice, educational legislation in general and Curriculum 2005 in particular, were stymied by lack of resources and capacity to implement.

(iv) Local Management of Schools (LMS)

The promulgation of SASA empowered parents to participate effectively in the education of their children. The State realised that to improve the quality of education including the maintenance of school buildings and grounds were not possible without the assistance of other stakeholders. Thus Governing Bodies of schools have been vested with the responsibilities of providing supplementary funds for their schools through fees from parents, donations, sponsorships and fundraising.

LMS delegates the school's financial budgets to governors. This is a major financial responsibility (Coleman, 1994:24). Most of our lay-governors do not have the necessary accounting nor administrative expertise to carry out these responsibilities.

1.3 STATING THE PROBLEM

In this mini-dissertation the author wishes to research the role of Government Policy in the Administration of School Funds in Actonville Public Schools. For this study, administration will mean the procurement and control of school funds.

1.4 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Based on observations made at limited number of schools, it would appear that there is a need for school principals to have knowledge of the following: general accounting control systems; fundraising and related control systems; budgeting and related control systems; and the use of control registers.

The research problem will be stated in a form of questions. Figure 1.3 on the following page reflects the relationship between the governing body and the State on the question of funding in public schools.

Why is sound administration of school-funds in public schools so important?

The present financial climate in South-Africa has resulted in the responsibility for the financing of education being devolved to the private sector, particularly the parent and business communities of the institutions. Schools therefore have to generate more funds to supplement the resources supplied by the State to be administered and managed as school funds.

Finance is only one of the seven resources identified by **Caldwell and Spinks (1992)**. Financial resources refer to the money available to purchase real resources. Real resources are those human and material resources which are required to deliver educational services. Human resources include teachers, support staff and (perhaps) unpaid volunteers. Material resources include buildings, equipment, furniture, books and teaching materials (**Coleman, 1994:4**).

Whilst it can be argued that real resources are as important as financial resources, it needs to be emphasized here that only financial resources make the acquisition of all other resources possible. Given the paramount importance of financial

Source: Litshani (1998:12)

What are the values of sound procurement and control of public funds in public schools?

In South Africa, the South African Schools Act (SASA) embodies a shift from supply-driven service delivery in schooling, where government decides on how service delivery takes place to a more demand-driven mode, where local communities gain a greater say in how they would like the service delivery that they receive to be structured. It is about giving local communities an increasing say in how the state funds that they would receive anyway, are spent.

The effect of SASA has not only been to increase the role of parents as consumers in choosing the school, but also to increase their participation in the school. With the introduction of open enrolments, schools have to compete for clients in the educational market place. They have to satisfy parents and learners if they are to continue existing.

The establishment of SGB's in schools make institutional images feasible. The Governing Body, particularly its marketing committee should project a positive image of the school in the community. The committee helps to liase the school with its stakeholders and this helps prospective parents and potential learners in choosing a particular school. **Bauch (2000:309)** believes that parental choice and school competition aim to improve schools and provide high quality of education for all. The school's image that is portrayed out there will determine the attraction of additional funding for the school (**Singo, 2003:11**).

Having delimited the problem of the research, it is now necessary to state the aims of this research study.

1.5 AIMS OF THE STUDY

Taking into consideration the problem of institutional image, as stated above, the research problem hopes to achieve the following outcomes:

- Probe into the nature of financial administration in public schools;
- Elicit and ascertain the perceptions of five principals of the five selected public schools in the Actonville, Benoni district on the importance of sound financial administration; and
- develop guidelines for principals of public schools on promotional strategies to improve the schools financial control systems.

A discussion of the method of research envisaged to discuss the problem of unsound financial administration, would now follow.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

1.6.1 Selecting the Paradigm

In qualitative research we want to find out not only what happens but also how it happens and, importantly, why it happens the way it does. In qualitative research we wish to give as clear and detailed an account of actions and representations of actions as possible, so that we can gain a better understanding of our world (**Henning, 2004:3**).

In this study, the Qualitative Research Method will be used in order to allow the researcher to “share” in the understanding and perceptions of others and explore how people structure and give meaning to their daily lives. According to **De Vos (1998:300)** qualitative data assist researchers to have the “insider” view of the phenomenon.

1.6.2 Target Group

Public schools both primary and secondary, will be the target group for this study. Each of these schools has two functional administrative structures, namely: the School Management Team (SMT) and the School Governing Body (SGB). The common compulsory member serving on both of these structures, is the school principal. The principal serves as the chairperson of the SMT as well as member of the SGB in an ex-officio capacity. Therefore, principals from the participating schools will be selected for participation in this study.

The schools will be selected according to the following criteria:

- A public school
- A Section 21 institution
- A school within the geographical area of Actonville, Benoni



The researcher's reason for selecting schools according to above criteria is because:

- These schools have already satisfied the requirements for Section 21 schools
- Both Primary and Secondary institutions are represented in this sample
- These schools are easily accessible to the researcher
- These schools will be the source of vital information which will assist in the interpretation of data

1.6.3 Interview Guide/Protocol

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with the principals of the five schools. These interviews will be conducted separately in their natural settings.

1.6.4 Sample Size

Five schools will be targeted where the principal of each school will be interviewed. An interview guide/protocol will be drawn up for the school principals.

1.6.5 Data Collection

Face to face interviews will be conducted with the five respondents. The researcher will record information from interviews by using observation, note taking and audiotapes.

1.6.6 Data Analysis

Large amounts of data are usually generated by qualitative methods of data collection. To enable the researcher to make sense out of this information, the data will be reduced into patterns, categories or themes. This categorisation into codes will assist the researcher in the interpretation of the data as well as with the formulation of the story on institutional control systems of school funds.

1.6.7 Confidentiality

The names of the schools, the respondents and the information supplied by them, will be kept anonymous and confidential.

1.6.8 Information Leaflet

All participants will be provided with the information leaflet indicating the purpose of the study. The results of the study will be made known to all the participants.

1.6.9 Literature Study

This research study will be tackled by looking at recent publications on the topic. These publications will include journals, dissertations, legislations and books which attempt an explanation of the phenomenon. The literature study will serve as the basic framework for data collection, analysis and interpretation (**Stevens, 1993:66**). It will also be used in the contextualization of the study (**Henning, 2004:27**). Hence it will become the basis for the contrasting and the comparison of findings of the qualitative study.

1.7 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

1.7.1 Act

According to the Department of Education, an Act is a law made by parliament of by a provincial legislature, for example the South African Schools Act. An Act of Parliament or of a provincial legislature or a regulation is also referred to as Legislation.

1.7.2 Constitution

A constitution is a document with important and basic rules and principles dealing with the organisation and governance of an institution. It also refers to the 'Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996'. The constitution is the highest law in the Republic to which all other laws and institutions are subject.

1.7.3 Governance

Means determining the policy, school development, administration, financial management and rules by which the school is to be controlled and organised.

This includes ensuring that the policies and rules are carried out in terms of the law.

1.7.4 Management

Refer to the day-to-day administration and organisation of teaching and learning at the school and the performance of the departmental responsibilities that are prescribed by law.

1.7.5 Administration

The procurement and control of school funds

1.8 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter one provides a brief outline and introduction to the topic of study namely the role of Government Policy in the administration of school funds in public schools. It also highlights pertinent sections of the South African Schools Act No 84 of 1996 which makes provision for local management of public schools.

Chapter two will consist of a literature study into:

- (i) Government Policy as it relates to funding of public schools
- (ii) Administration procedures as it relates to the control of school-funds

This chapter will also be used to develop a theoretical framework which can be used in data collection, analysis, interpretation and recommendations.

Chapter three will explore the procedures of data collection and data procedure. Five principals of selected public schools in the Actonville area of Benoni, will be investigated. An interview guide will be used and data will be recorded on an audiocassette recorder. A qualitative research procedure will be followed in this study.

Chapter four will deal with the analysis and interpretation of the data collected. The process of data analysis is regarded as electric (**Creswell, 1994:153**). In working with qualitative data a researcher has many options on how to convert the “raw” data to final patterns of meaning (**Henning, 2004:102**). In qualitative analysis, several simultaneous activities engage the attention of the researcher, collecting of data from the field, sorting information into categories, formatting into a story or picture and actually writing the qualitative text. Data analysis will be conducted as an activity simultaneously with data collection, data interpretation and narrative report writing (**Singo, 2003:18**).

Chapter five will deal with findings from the research. It will also provide recommendations and suggestions relevant to the administration of school funds with regard to public schools.

Chapter six will comprise of:

- A summary of the study
- Conclusions drawn from the research
- Recommendations arising from the research findings

1.9 CONCLUSION

The orientation of this research study was presented in this chapter. Research methods, concepts and problems were highlighted and the research problem was stated and motivated. In discussing the above, sections of the South African Schools Act, No 84 of 1996 as it relates to school funding and management were discussed.

Having completed the orientation, chapter two will now commence. This literature will demarcate the problem and serve as a theoretical framework from

which data collection, analysis interpretation and recommendations can be made. In attempting to understand the crux of the role of government policy in the administration of school funds, recent journals, legislations and books will be consulted. The review will essentially be explanatory in nature.

